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Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste

(for the period 16 August 2005 to 13 January 2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1599 (2005) of 28 April 2005, in which the Council decided to establish, as of 21 May 2005, the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) for a period of one year. In paragraph 10 of that resolution, the Council requested that it be regularly informed of developments on the ground, the implementation of the mandate of UNOTIL and the planning for a transition to a sustainable development assistance framework and requested me to submit a report every four months. The present report covers major developments since my progress report of 18 August 2005 (S/2005/533), and outlines the ongoing plans for the transition from UNOTIL to a sustainable development framework.

II. Recent political and security developments in Timor-Leste

2. During the reporting period, the overall situation in Timor-Leste remained calm, except for a few isolated incidents involving the incursion of former militias in the Bobonaro District, which led to a number of arrests by the Timorese national police. The most serious border incident took place on 6 January 2006 and resulted in the death of three infiltrators into Timor-Leste. The incident is being investigated by the Timorese authorities.

3. Further progress was achieved in delineating the land border between Timor-Leste and Indonesia. On 30 August 2005, the foreign ministers of Timor-Leste and Indonesia presided over a ceremony held at the border village of Mota'ain to mark the placement of the first marker along their common land border, commencing the process of demarcation of the 96 per cent of the land border agreed to in the Provisional Agreement on the Borderline signed by the two ministers in Dili in April 2005. In December, significant progress was made in negotiations between the two sides on the remaining 4 per cent of the border. It is hoped that more progress will be achieved in the coming weeks, so that the delineation of the unresolved segments of their common border can be completed.

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4. A number of cross-border incidents occurred in September and October, mainly as a result of local disputes between villagers living on the two sides of the border. Farmland on the Timorese side of the Oecussi-West Timor border was burned and several stone-throwing incidents took place, during which some villagers and members of the Border Patrol Unit of the Timorese national police suffered light injuries. UNOTIL facilitated a number of exchanges between the Indonesian army and the Timorese police, in which the two sides agreed on joint measures to prevent recurrence of further incidents. The situation along the Oecussi-West Timor border has since stabilized and a number of community-level meetings aimed at promoting cross-border cultural and economic exchanges have taken place. Concerted efforts are nevertheless needed by both sides to inform the population in the border districts about the agreed boundary.

5. Concerns were also evident on the Timor-Leste side as reports were received in October of engineering works being undertaken by Indonesia at the border in Mota'ain, in Bobonaro District, which Timor-Leste claimed were extending into its territory. This was preceded by reports of a dyke construction alleged by Timor-Leste to have been constructed partially within the 4 per cent of unresolved territory at the border near the village of Memo, also in Bobonaro District. Following joint verification of these reports, the Indonesian side agreed to destroy the part of the engineering works in Mota'ain. Notwithstanding the readiness of the security agencies of both countries to work together at the local level to prevent tensions arising from border incidents, the two sides urgently need to agree on a border management framework.

6. The fifth round of local elections was held in two phases in the districts of Dili and Liquica, on 20 and 30 September 2005, marking the final round of village and sub-village elections in all 13 districts. Overall, the elections were conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner and the average voter turnout reached over 80 per cent. Several political parties had fielded candidates. The ruling party won a large majority where in the fifth round alone, Fretilin gained 30 out of 31 village chief positions in Dili District, and 20 out of 23 positions in Liquica District. Re-elections were held on 21 December 2005 for 18 village council positions in 10 districts, following an order from the Court of Appeals citing technical irregularities during the earlier elections.

7. The Timorese legal framework was further strengthened. Following parliamentary authorization for the adoption of the penal code and the civil procedure code on 29 July 2005 (see S/2005/533, para. 5), the two codes were reviewed and approved by the Council of Ministers and will become effective in January 2006. Meanwhile, the civil code was submitted to the National Parliament for approval. The recent approval of three procurement laws, on procurement, public contracts and sanctions on procurement procedures, will enable the Government to standardize its procurement processes. In addition, the law on customs brokers, which regulates their role and functions, is expected to ensure transparency and accountability of the customs service and to facilitate foreign investment and the promotion of exports, with a positive impact on economic development. However, the Government still needs to approve the organic law of the Office of the Inspector-General, which exercises control functions over Government agencies, and to establish offices of internal control in all public institutions.

8. Significant progress was made during the reporting period towards addressing the concerns of veterans. A special committee of the National Parliament drafted a bill defining, inter alia, who would qualify as a former combatant and what entitlements veterans would receive. The National Parliament held a series of hearings with veteran groups and public entities to seek their views on the draft bill prior to its finalization by the special committee and voting by the National Parliament. The draft bill is currently being considered by the Parliament's special committee.

9. On 31 October 2005, after close to five years of operation, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation submitted to President Xanana Gusmão its final report providing a record of human rights abuses in Timor-Leste from 1974 to 1999. The report constitutes an important milestone in the search for truth and reconciliation in Timor-Leste. President Gusmão submitted the report to the National Parliament on 28 November and to Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri on 30 November. President Gusmão will submit the report to me on 20 January 2006.

10. Preparations for parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007 are already under way. To date, nine political parties have registered under the 2004 Law on Political Parties. One of them is a newly formed party, whose membership consists mostly of former armed and clandestine resistance members. Three of the main opposition political parties represented in the National Parliament have been exploring possibilities of forging an alliance to contest the general elections.

11. The bilateral Commission for Truth and Friendship established by Timor-Leste and Indonesia commenced its work in August 2005. Its work has focused primarily on analysis of documents provided by the Ad Hoc Human Rights Tribunal in Jakarta. The Commission has also submitted a request to the Government of Timor-Leste to review the records compiled by the former United Nations Serious Crimes Unit in Dili.

12. On 12 January 2006, Timor-Leste and Australia signed an agreement on the sharing of natural resources from the Timor Sea, allocating 50 per cent of the revenues to Timor-Leste. It will provide the country with the much-needed means to promote its social and economic development and to improve the living conditions of its people. This agreement does not, however, affect the positions and claims of both countries in respect to maritime boundaries.

III. Contribution of the United Nations

A. Role of the Mission

13. UNOTIL continued to focus on the coordination of donor assistance, to encourage the implementation of projects towards sustainable and long-term development in Timor-Leste and ensure a smooth transition from UNOTIL to a development assistance framework. On 9 December 2005, my Special Representative, Sukehiro Hasegawa, chaired the third meeting of the Consultative Group established under paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1599 (2005). The meeting focused on progress made in the provision of training in observance of democratic governance and human rights to Timorese public officials and civil society. In addition, UNOTIL continued to hold policy review and coordination

meetings (see S/2005/533, para. 11) on a weekly basis, to review issues of concern in the development of institutional capacity in Timor-Leste with representatives of Timorese State institutions and civil society, the United Nations system and development partners.

14. UNOTIL efforts to hand over responsibilities to the Government and development partners have made further progress during the period under review. With regard to support to the development of critical State institutions, it is expected that of the 45 civilian adviser positions currently provided by UNOTIL, 5 will be phased out by 20 May 2006, while the remainder will continue to be required beyond that date. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has agreed to take over all 17 positions in the justice sector, 3 in the National Parliament and 1 in the Office of the President in the respective UNDP support projects. It is expected that the World Bank will take over the six positions in the Ministry of Planning and Finance, while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has agreed to provide an adviser for the Director of the Treasury. Among the bilateral development partners, Australia has indicated its intention to assist in strengthening the Office of the Prosecutor-General; Brazil and Portugal have expressed their readiness to support the development of the justice sector with funds and advisers; the United States of America and Japan have indicated their support for the two positions in the Office of the Inspector-General related to transparency and accountability; and Japan has indicated its intention to support a position in small and medium-sized industries in the areas of development and civil aviation. In addition, New Zealand has shown interest in providing one human rights adviser to the Office of the Prime Minister, while Cape Verde has offered to make available six legal advisers to different State institutions. Efforts are under way to identify partners who will support other civilian adviser posts.

15. In the area of police development, UNOTIL is planning to complete all training programmes for Timorese national police by 20 May 2006. UNOTIL has identified the following four positions that are needed beyond 20 May 2006: field training coordinator, adviser on election security planning and execution, adviser to the Minister of Interior and adviser to the General Commander of the national police. Efforts are under way to identify partners willing to provide these positions.

16. In the area of observance of democratic governance and human rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is considering the appointment of a human rights officer within the future United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, to facilitate the mainstreaming of human rights in the work of United Nations agencies and to ensure the full implementation of the technical cooperation programme with Timor-Leste in 2006 and 2007. This project is currently being prepared in cooperation with the human rights unit of UNOTIL and in consultation with State institutions and civic organizations. In addition, OHCHR plans to provide funding for human rights initiatives under this programme and, for this purpose, intends to send a needs assessment mission to Timor-Leste in early 2006.

17. In accordance with paragraph 9 of Security Council resolution 1599 (2005), UNOTIL has copied all records compiled by the United Nations Serious Crimes Unit, including forensic photographs. As previously reported (S/2005/533, para. 13), the Unit's records, including the copies made by UNOTIL, are currently maintained under the authority of the Prosecutor-General of Timor-Leste. However, an

agreement has been reached with the Government of Timor-Leste on the preservation and management of the serious crimes records, including the conditions under which copies of the records would be held by the United Nations and the circumstances in which the Organization would grant access to them. Following the signing of the agreement, the original records will be formally handed over to the Prosecutor-General, while a complete duplicate copy of the records is being prepared for shipment to New York for preservation.

Programme I
Support for the development of critical State institutions

18. During the period under review, UNOTIL supported further development of critical State institutions. Thirty-nine advisers continued to train and transfer skills and knowledge to their Timorese counterparts in the justice sector, the Office of the President and the National Parliament, as well as across various Government institutions. In addition, UNOTIL continued to promote sound work ethics in the public sector.

19. In the justice sector, 23 civilian advisers continued to provide training as well as perform line functions in all four district courts, with support from six additional advisers deployed under the UNDP strengthening the justice system project. The UNOTIL training programme for judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers made tangible progress during the period under review, enabling 27 national judicial actors to successfully pass their midterm evaluation. As a result, they will undertake specialized training for judges, prosecutors and public defenders from January to May 2006. More importantly, as of January 2006, they will begin on-the-job-training, serving in the courts on a probationary basis under the supervision of experienced international judges, prosecutors and public defenders.

20. With support from UNOTIL judicial advisers, considerable progress was made towards reducing the backlog of cases, while access to justice services was significantly broadened in the districts. Of the approximately 3,000 pending criminal and civilian cases identified by the Office of the Prosecutor-General in September 2005, it was noted that 67 prisoners had been in detention for more than six months without proper arrest warrants and trial, among an average of 270 people held in prisons in 2005. As a result, a task force on illegal detention was established to resolve the issue. By the end of the year, more than 80 per cent of the identified cases of illegal detention had been resolved and focus has now shifted towards the institutionalization of a standardized case management system. One international defence lawyer was assigned to regularly visit prisons in order to ensure that all detainees are being provided with proper defence services.

21. Greater efficiency in case management has been achieved in the court registries, with tutoring, while adapting to the new procedural laws. However, national court actors will continue to require assistance in the application of the new legislation. Case management within the Prosecution Service remains weak, indicating an urgent need for additional human resources as well as basic office equipment and infrastructure. With assistance from several international prosecutors, the Prosecution Service issued directives establishing clear procedures for, inter alia, the establishment of registries and secretariat departments, collection of relevant statistical data, case file distribution and hierarchical control on

decisions. In addition, a complete inventory and registry of pending criminal files was completed.

22. Six UNOTIL legal advisers continued to assist in the drafting of legislation, including ministerial organic laws, and the streamlining of procedures and processes within the Council of Ministers. Lack of qualified national legal drafters remains an important concern, which may cause significant delays in the development and approval of key legislation, unless international support in this area is extended beyond May 2006. UNOTIL legal advisers also continued to support the National Parliament in the exercise of its legislative powers, although Parliament's oversight capacities, especially with respect to the annual national budget and budgetary processes, remain weak. A recent assessment indicated that it would take several years before the National Parliament can be fully functional without international advisory support. One UNOTIL adviser on the Petroleum Fund, assigned to the Office of the Prime Minister, provided assistance and advice to the Prime Minister during negotiations over the sharing of natural resources in the Timor Sea, which led to the 12 January 2006 agreement with Australia.

23. As stated in my previous report (S/2005/533, para. 17), the Government, in a letter from the Minister for State Administration to the Electoral Assistance Division of the Secretariat, requested international assistance for the general elections in 2007. In response to that request, an electoral assistance needs assessment mission was sent to Timor-Leste in November 2005. It carried out an assessment of the prevailing conditions in the country and identified several pertinent issues that needed to be addressed to ensure free and fair elections in 2007. Based on the visit, the mission recommended that discussions and decisions take place within Timor-Leste prior to the drafting of electoral laws on a number of fundamental issues, including the role and functions of an independent electoral supervisory body, the electoral system of representation, the timing of the elections and the terms of office for the President and members of the National Parliament. The mission strongly recommended international assistance in the electoral process, including support to voter registration and electoral administration and the provision of resources. Based on the assessment mission's recommendations, UNOTIL is providing, within existing resources, advisory assistance for the preparation of the elections, as part of its efforts to support the capacity-building of State institutions.

24. Two UNOTIL advisers assigned to the Office of the Inspector-General assisted in the completion of the 69 reports covering the activities of the Office since its inception in October 2000. The majority of cases involve non-criminal offences, such as negligence by public officers, irregularities and administrative deficiencies. Also reported were five cases of criminal offences such as bribery, theft and document falsification. The advisers also organized monthly national seminars on auditing and investigations for both public officials and civil society, in cooperation with the Office of the Inspector-General, as well as the Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice and the Office of the Prosecutor-General, the Office of the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Human Rights, the Timorese national police and civil society organizations. It is estimated, however, that the Office of the Inspector-General will continue to require further support in the form of training in law, accounting, auditing and engineering, as well as other areas, in order to strengthen its human resources capacity.

25. As of October 2005, the UNOTIL Civilian Support Group and the UNDP Institutional Capacity Building Support Programme have been fully integrated within the Government's Capacity Development Coordination Unit under the Office of the Prime Minister. This will facilitate the eventual takeover by the Government of all functions related to the management and coordination of assistance programmes, including the work of international advisers.

Programme II
Support for further development of the Timorese police

26. UNOTIL police advisers continued to support further development of the Timorese national police through the provision of training, mentoring and the transfer of skills and knowledge to their national counterpart. Their main focus has been on further development of the specialized units of the Timorese police, including the Police Reserve Unit, the Rapid Intervention Unit and the Immigration and Marine Units. In this respect, UNOTIL police advisers conducted 40 specialized courses targeting the 893 members of the specialized units. Programmes aimed at enhancing their computer literacy and Portuguese language skills were also introduced. In addition, assistance continued to be provided to the Professional Ethics Office and the Crime Scene Office of the national police.

27. Since my previous report (S/2005/533), the Rapid Intervention Unit completed comprehensive training programmes. The operations that the Unit has since conducted under the close supervision of UNOTIL police advisers showed remarkable improvements, especially with regard to professionalism, discipline and observance of human rights. The Immigration Unit also made considerable progress towards self-sufficiency. In addition, three new specialized units, namely the Counter-Terrorism Unit, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit and the Public Information Office, have been established. UNOTIL provided basic training in counter-terrorism and explosive ordnance to these units, to be followed by advance training in the coming months.

28. UNOTIL police advisers also contributed to strengthening the capacity of the Timorese police leadership. Leadership and management courses were organized for senior police officials, and assistance was provided in the preparation of work plans and through joint assessments. UNOTIL police advisers and Timorese police leaders have been jointly preparing a long-term plan, known as "Plan 2020", for the Timorese police, which has provided the Timorese police leadership with an opportunity to think strategically and to plan and organize their future activities. UNOTIL police advisers also worked in close cooperation with Timorese police leaders in the formulation of operational and training manuals for various units. UNOTIL police advisers and Timorese police officers are jointly preparing 11 operational/training manuals based on best practices and international democratic policing standards. Recently, 10 Timorese national police officers were deployed to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, demonstrating the force's ability to contribute to international peacekeeping operations.

29. In an effort to ensure the sustainable development of the Timorese police, UNOTIL police advisers conducted a six-week master trainer course for 25 Timorese police officers from specialized and other police units. The aim of this course was to equip a pool of national police trainers with the instructional skills and capacities required to conduct future training activities for the national police.

The course has enabled Timorese police trainers to identify gaps, transform them into learning objectives and target the training courses to the specific needs of the Timorese police.

30. Ensuring due respect for human rights by law enforcement personnel remains, as in many post-conflict societies, a challenge. To this end, UNOTIL police advisers, working together with the UNOTIL human rights unit, have been focusing on developing professionalism of the Timorese police. In addition, UNOTIL, in cooperation with the Minister of the Interior and the General Commander of the Timorese police, plan to launch an initiative aimed at reducing the number of human rights violations by the national police by 75 per cent by May 2006. The initiative, to be implemented as of January, includes the training of Timorese police commanders on stress management and self-control techniques; further training of Timorese police officers on the code of conduct; improved disciplinary mechanisms within the Timorese police; and enhanced coordination between the Timorese police and prosecution services.

Support for development of the Border Patrol Unit

31. As previously reported (S/2005/533, para. 28), 15 military advisers and 20 police advisers are deployed under UNOTIL, with two main tasks. The first is to support further development of the Border Patrol Unit of the Timorese national police; the second is to assist the Government in coordinating contacts with the Indonesian military, with the objective of enabling the Border Patrol Unit to assume full responsibility for such coordination as soon as possible.

32. With regard to the first task, UNOTIL police and military advisers continued to provide training and mentoring to members of the Border Patrol Unit. Two training courses are presently ongoing. The first one, on police intervention tactics, is aimed at 36 officers of the Unit in Suai. The other is an advance course held in Dili for 34 officers from all border districts and includes sessions on human rights, law and disciplinary regulations, smuggling, foot patrol techniques, police ethics and professional behaviour. UNOTIL police and military training advisers are assisted by the newly trained Timorese police trainers, who are conducting 65 per cent of the courses. It is expected that by March 2006, Timorese police trainers will be able to provide training to Unit personnel without assistance from international advisers. UNOTIL military training advisers have also been conducting workplace assessments to ensure that officers of the Unit are applying the relevant border management skills in the field.

33. UNOTIL advisers have been working together with UNDP and the National Democratic Institute, a United States non-governmental organization, to improve the community policing skills of the Border Patrol Unit. The joint initiative aims at community and police education along with joint problem-solving through cross-border negotiations and understanding of the people on either side. Such efforts aim to enable the police and community to become partners in addressing day-to-day problems, thereby developing productive partnerships and greater satisfaction with the police services on the part of the community. Such initiatives are expected to continue beyond the end of the UNOTIL mandate.

34. One of the main challenges in training the Border Patrol Unit has been the Unit's shortage of material resources and logistic support required to effectively conduct border operations. In particular, it has been noted that the Unit continues to

face a significant deficiency of such basic supplies as fuel and essential equipment, including binoculars and compasses. Communications equipment is in poor condition and suffers from inadequate power supply. Living quarters and post facilities remain inadequate in many areas.

35. With regard to the second task, UNOTIL military advisers continued to facilitate contacts between the Border Patrol Unit and its Indonesian counterpart. During the border incidents which occurred in Oecussi in September and October 2005, the advisers were instrumental in arranging meetings between the Unit and the Indonesian military, leading to a peaceful resolution of the situation. UNOTIL military advisers also encouraged and attended regular border meetings between the Unit and its Indonesian counterpart at the tactical level at various junction points, and facilitated regular family meetings and movement of people to and from Indonesia.

36. Joint military and police adviser teams continued to be deployed to each of the three border sectors. They also continued to visit all Border Patrol Unit posts to provide further guidance to national officers in various aspects of their work. In addition, UNOTIL military advisers conducted regular patrols in the districts of Oecussi, Bobonaro and Covalima, to monitor and report on the border situation and the relationship between the Unit and Indonesian security agencies.

Programme III
Provision of training in observance of democratic governance and human rights

37. Of the 10 UNOTIL human rights officers, 5 were assigned to various State institutions to strengthen their capacity to protect and promote human rights. These institutions include the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice and the National Parliament.

38. The UNOTIL international human rights officer deployed to the Office of the Adviser on Human Rights to the Prime Minister, supported by two national human rights officers, provided key assistance in the implementation of the Government's human rights programme, and the development of a national human rights action plan. The international and national human rights officers assigned to the Office of the Provedor for Human Rights and Justice assisted with strategic planning and advice to the Provedor and his deputies. The UNOTIL Human Rights Unit also assisted the Office of the Provedor in the recruitment of 16 staff, which is expected to be completed by mid-February 2006. However, a number of key requirements remain to be addressed, especially in view of the opening of the Office of the Provedor to the general public in March 2006; these include the finalization of a strategic plan by February 2006 and the establishment of a complaint handling system, which should become operational by May 2006.

39. Within the framework of a project implemented by OHCHR, the UNOTIL Human Rights Unit provided support to the Government in the preparation of its reports under seven core human rights treaties. Such reports have included the development of guidelines for reporting and the development of procedures for interministerial consultations and public dissemination of reports. First drafts of the expected core document and targeted treaty specific documents on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been completed. Important intragovernmental coordination and resource challenges remain, and it is estimated that political, technical and financial support for ongoing treaty reporting activities will continue to be required at least until December 2006.

40. UNOTIL supported the preparation of the report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, which, as mentioned earlier (see para. 8), has been submitted to President Gusmão. UNOTIL also continued to strengthen the capacity of civil society in the field of human rights. To this end, the Human Rights Unit organized three training programmes for private lawyers, members of local human rights organizations and human rights activists. The programmes focused on human rights in general, with specific sessions devoted to the human rights of detainees and human rights monitoring. The Unit also continued to work with five human rights non-governmental organizations on strengthening their monitoring skills, as part of the human rights violations database project begun in January 2005.

B. Role of the United Nations system

41. Timor-Leste remained strongly committed to work towards achievement of goals laid out in the national development plan, and to enhance efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Nevertheless, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with more than 40 per cent of the population living below the poverty line. During the period under review, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, together with the Bretton Woods institutions and other donors continued to provide assistance to help Timor-Leste meet its social, economic and human development needs while preparing to take over responsibilities from UNOTIL in May 2006.

42. The World Bank continued to coordinate the consolidation support programme (see S/2005/533, para. 37), which contributes approximately $10 million per year to the national budget of Timor-Leste, while monitoring progress in the areas of governance, basic service delivery and job creation. Since August 2005, the Trust Fund for Timor-Leste, administered by the World Bank, has assisted, inter alia, the establishment of the Petroleum Fund, the rehabilitation of 22 market sites, the training of 4,000 new entrepreneurs at the five business development centres, the activities of the electronic information centre for agriculture and increased access to education through the construction of six schools. The World Bank has also prepared a multi-donor funded Planning and Financial Management Capacity-Building Programme, which will provide approximately $35 million to strengthen capacity-building in planning and financial management at the various levels in the Ministry of Planning and Finance and in other ministries and districts. The road rehabilitation programme administered by the Asian Development Bank is well under way, with seven contract packages being implemented concurrently.

43. IMF maintained assistance to the Timorese authorities in addressing key policy issues, including how best to employ growing oil and gas revenues so as to improve infrastructure and social services in a stable macroeconomic environment. IMF provided substantial technical assistance to the Banking and Payments Authority of Timor-Leste in the establishment of a full-fledged central bank and in developing its capacity for management of the Petroleum Fund. IMF also intends to appoint a long-term adviser to the Director of the Treasury in the Ministry of Planning and Finance.

44. UNDP continued with the implementation of its Institutional Capacity Development Support Project and the Human Resource Management Project and assisting in the further development of Timorese institutional, organizational and human resource capacities. As reported in paragraph 14 above, the UNDP Justice Sector Support Project continued to provide training to Timorese judges, prosecutors and public defenders, in cooperation with UNOTIL judicial advisers. This programme and the UNDP Parliament Support Project are expected to take over functions of the adviser posts currently performed by UNOTIL in the coming months and to continue and expand coordinated support to the justice sector and the National Parliament. In collaboration with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNDP continued to work with the Ministry for State Administration to establish a decentralized local government system. To date, 9 local assemblies have been established, and 171 local assembly members and local government officials have been trained. UNDP also supported the completion of the local election process, including through the training of 1,228 female candidates, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women. In addition, UNDP supported a project on sustainable water and energy services in rural areas, funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

45. Together with the United Nations Office for Project Services, UNDP continued to implement community activation programmes, including in the districts of Ainaro, Manatuto and Oecussi. Moreover, in cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers, UNDP continued to support the Civil Society Organization Project, which has provided grants to enhance the capacity of 21 civil society organizations. Some 94 United Nations Volunteers are currently deployed to Timor-Leste, while the United Nations Volunteers fields 24 Timorese volunteers to other countries.

46. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued to assist the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in the development of an agricultural statistics system, as well as in the preparation of a national forest policy aimed at addressing the problem of land degradation and natural disasters caused by increased illegal logging of wood. In order to prepare for emergencies caused by food shortages, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Timor-Leste are currently undertaking a rapid needs assessment in the affected areas of 12 districts. WFP and the Government of Timor-Leste have also launched Safety Net, a programme that provides supplementary feeding for pregnant and lactating women and children under five, and daily snacks for primary school children.

47. In the health sector, the World Health Organization (WHO) supported key initiatives, including the coordination of a national task force for addressing avian flu. With technical support from WHO, the Ministry of Health was able to provide central and district-level health care providers with basic knowledge required for the management of an avian influenza pandemic. In addition, WHO continued to assist the Ministry of Health in strengthening the integration of disease surveillance, as well as in the areas of maternal and child health, health promotion and communicable diseases. In cooperation with WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also helped the Ministry of Health to conduct a nationwide vaccination campaign against poliomyelitis. UNICEF supplied HIV/AIDS test kits for use in select health facilities and regional hospitals, as well as provided training for staff at the Ministry of Health on voluntary and confidential counselling and

testing. UNICEF also assisted local health officers in the development of a programme of community-based family health promoters.

48. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to support the improvement of emergency obstetric care in district hospitals. UNFPA is also carrying out a review of the national family planning programme, prior to the development of a national plan of action. In addition, UNFPA continued to support the Ministry of Planning and Finance and the National Statistics Directorate in the analysis of data from the 2004 census.

49. In the area of education, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) assisted the Ministry of Education and Culture in the organization of the first conference on science education in Timor-Leste. UNESCO also continued to support pre-service and in-service teacher trainings, in partnership with the National University of Timor-Leste. Meanwhile, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Culture in training grade one teachers in the implementation of the first bilingual national primary school curriculum. UNICEF also continued to support the Life Skills Based Education training programme for young people.

50. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued to encourage the development of national law and regulations for the protection of refugees and to support the enhancement of capacity of the Asylum Unit within the Department of Immigration. UNHCR also continued to provide direct assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees, ensuring that their basic needs are met. The International Organization for Migration continued with the implementation of its assistance to the community stabilization programme, which provides over $1.2 million in direct material support to vulnerable communities, to enhance their capacity to take charge of their own development.

IV. Financial aspects

51. In its resolution 60/244, the General Assembly approved the funding for UNOTIL for the initial period from 21 May to 31 December 2005. With respect to the requirements for the period from 1 January to 20 May 2006, the Assembly, in its resolution 60/248, gave provisional approval of the budget of UNOTIL, pending the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/60/585) at the first part of its resumed sixtieth session.

V. Observations and recommendations

52. During the reporting period, the Government and the people of Timor-Leste, supported by UNOTIL and other international partners, made further progress towards establishing effective democratic governance in the country. The successful conclusion of local elections, the strengthening of the legal framework through the adoption of key legislation and the improved observance of human rights by the police are good examples of such progress.

53. Notwithstanding some border incidents, the situation in Timor-Leste remained generally calm and stable. Relations with neighbouring countries continued to improve. Good progress was achieved in negotiations with Indonesia on the delineation of the 4 per cent of the land border that remains unresolved. I welcome this progress and, at the same time, encourage the authorities in Dili and Jakarta to make further efforts to reach final agreement on their land border without further delay. The conclusion of the agreement on sharing of revenues from exploitation of natural resources in the Timor Sea was a positive reflection of Timor-Leste's relations with Australia.

54. UNOTIL continued to provide support to Timor-Leste through the three programmes mandated by the Security Council. At the same time, the Mission has focused increasingly on identifying development partners to take over functions that will need to continue beyond 20 May 2006, in order to ensure a smooth and rapid transition to a sustainable development framework, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1599 (2005). The pace of this process has been encouraging, as outlined earlier in the report (see paras. 14-16), although much remains to be done. The Development Partners' Conference scheduled for April will be an important opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to Timor-Leste. I welcome the commitments made thus far and hope that they will soon be translated into concrete action, with timely and generous funding.

55. Despite the remarkable achievements made by Timor-Leste since 1999, the situation in the country remains fragile. Crucial State institutions, in particular the justice sector, remain weak, in large part owing to a lack of qualified human resources. As noted earlier in the present report, according to some assessments, it may take several years for the National Parliament to be able to function without international support. Time will also be required for democratic governance and human rights to take root in the country. Therefore, I strongly believe that while the future of the country rests with the Timorese people and their Government, the international community should remain engaged in Timor-Leste beyond 20 May 2006, when the UNOTIL mandate expires. In this regard, the appointment of a new United Nations Resident Coordinator who will assume his duties in Timor-Leste in February 2006 should facilitate a gradual handover of responsibilities for the coordination of international assistance to Timor-Leste.

56. A major challenge facing Timor-Leste in the near future will be the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007. Both elections will be held for the first time since the country assumed independence in 2002. The prevailing opinion among Timorese stakeholders suggests that, in order to ensure that these elections are successful, some international political presence should remain in the country until the end of the electoral process. I would welcome the Security Council's suggestions regarding appropriate ways and means of assisting Timor-Leste to face this challenge, which could have a significant impact on the long-term peace and stability of the country.

57. In conclusion, I would like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative, Sukehiro Hasegawa, and to all the men and women of UNOTIL, for their dedicated efforts to discharge the mandate entrusted to the Mission by the Security Council.

United Nations S/2006/25

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 January 2006

Original: English

Letter dated 17 January 2006 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General*

I have the honour to refer to the following resolutions adopted on 20 December 2005, which read as follows:

Resolution 1645 (2005), paragraph 4

"*Also decides* that the Peacebuilding Commission shall have a standing Organizational Committee, responsible for developing its own rules of procedure and working methods, comprising:

(a) Seven members of the Security Council, including permanent members, selected according to rules and procedures decided by the Council;"

Resolution 1646 (2005), paragraph 1

"*Decides* pursuant to paragraph 4 (a) of resolution 1645 (2005) that the permanent members listed in article 23 (1) of the Charter shall be members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission and that, in addition, the Council shall select annually two of its elected members to participate in the Organizational Committee;"

Following informal consultations among members of the Security Council on 13 January 2006, they agreed to the selection of Denmark and the United Republic of Tanzania as the two members of the Council's elected member category for the Organizational Committee for a term of one year until the end of 2006. They also took note of the position expressed by Argentina and supported by Peru that a member of the Latin American and Caribbean States Group be considered for selection upon the expiration of the terms of Denmark and the United Republic of Tanzania.

(*Signed*) Augustine P. **Mahiga**
President of the Security Council

* A copy has been sent to the President of the General Assembly, Jan Eliasson.

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Security Council

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18 January 2006

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

(For the period from 22 July 2005 to 20 January 2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1614 (2005) of 29 July 2005, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further period of six months, until 31 January 2006. It covers developments since the previous report, dated 21 July 2005 (S/2005/460).

II. Situation in the area of operation

2. During the reporting period a tense and fragile quiet generally prevailed in the UNIFIL area of operation, interrupted by a few serious clashes across the Blue Line. In the most serious incident, a heavy exchange of fire between Hizbollah and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) across the Blue Line took place on 21 November, surpassing any activity level since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000. On 27 December, unidentified armed elements fired four Katyusha rockets from the general area of Addaisseh village towards Israel. There was an additional incident of exchange of fire between IDF and Hizbollah later in November. On two occasions, unidentified armed elements fired rockets from Lebanese territory across the Blue Line towards Israel. Recurrent Israeli air violations were a continuous source of tension. There were almost daily violations of the line of withdrawal by Lebanese shepherds and frequent incidents of stone throwing from the Lebanese side.

3. In a serious breach of the ceasefire, Hizbollah launched an attack across the Blue Line on 21 November. The exchange began with heavy Hizbollah mortar and rocket fire from a number of locations against several IDF positions close to the Blue Line in the eastern sector of the UNIFIL area of operation. Simultaneously, a large group of Hizbollah fighters infiltrated Ghajar village and launched an assault on the Mayor's office and the IDF position inside the village, south of the Blue Line, which was vacant at the time. This was followed by an attempt to attack the main IDF position on the eastern outskirts of the village. Four Hizbollah fighters were killed during the exchange of small arms fire with IDF. There was significant damage to civilian property in the village and one civilian resident was wounded.

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4. The ensuing Israeli retaliation was heavy and included aerial bombing. The exchange of fire subsequently spread all along the Blue Line and lasted for over nine hours. Around 800 artillery, tank and mortar rounds and rockets were exchanged. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) dropped at least 30 aerial bombs. One Hizbollah mortar round directly hit a house in the village of Metulla, causing material damage but no casualties. On the Lebanese side, the bridge two kilometres north of Ghajar was destroyed by an Israeli air strike. There were five instances of firing by IDF close to United Nations positions in the area. Twelve Israeli soldiers and one civilian, and an unidentified number of Hizbollah fighters were wounded. A number of Hizbollah positions close to the Blue Line were destroyed or heavily damaged and there was significant damage to some IDF positions and equipment.

5. UNIFIL and my senior representatives in the region were in close contact with the parties throughout the hostilities, urging them to exercise maximum restraint. Their intervention contributed to avoiding further deterioration of the situation and prevented the incident from escalating out of control. UNIFIL eventually succeeded in brokering a ceasefire. Subsequently, on 25 November, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNIFIL facilitated the handover from IDF to Lebanese authorities of the bodies of three Hizbollah fighters killed during the exchange of fire in Ghajar. The body of the fourth Hizbollah fighter was brought back into Lebanese territory by Hizbollah. Owing to the continuing volatile situation in the area, UNIFIL maintains a static patrol presence along the northern side of Ghajar village.

6. In another escalation of violence, on 27 December, unidentified armed elements fired four Katyusha rockets from near the Lebanese village of Addaisseh towards Israel. Three rockets landed in the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shemona, causing serious damage to two houses but no casualties. IAF retaliated with an air strike against a compound of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command in Naameh, 10 kilometres south of Beirut. The Government of Lebanon informed the Secretary-General that it launched an investigation into the incident and would hold the perpetrators responsible so as to prevent recurrence of such acts in the future. On 7 January, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Al-Qaida's leader in Iraq, claimed Al-Qaida responsibility for the attack. The claim could not be verified.

7. Tension was also high on 25 August, when two rockets were fired from Lebanese territory in the general area of Majdal Silm. One impacted across the Blue Line, close to a residential area of Kibbutz Margaliot, while the other landed close to the Lebanese village of Mays al-Jabal. There were no casualties. Hizbollah denied any involvement in the incident and there was a claim of responsibility from Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

8. On 23 November, an Israeli civilian paraglider was blown across the Blue Line and landed in Lebanese territory in the vicinity of United Nations position 8-32A, provoking an exchange of small arms fire between Hizbollah and IDF. There were no injuries and the paraglider managed to cross back into Israel, where he was arrested by the authorities.

9. On 30 December, Lebanese locals discovered two 122-mm rockets in a banana plantation close to Naqoura fishing harbour, approximately 1.5 kilometres north of UNIFIL headquarters. The rockets, with a 12-kilometre range, were mounted on a wooden ramp, wired, connected to timers and ready for firing. Lebanese armed forces disarmed and removed the rockets.

10. The Israeli Air Force violated Lebanese airspace on many occasions during the reporting period, disturbing the relative calm along the Blue Line. During the time of heightened tension in November, overflights by jets, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles or drones were numerous and particularly intrusive and provocative. Following the Hizbollah attack on 21 November, Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets over some areas of Lebanon, including Beirut. Israeli officials maintained the position that overflights would be carried out whenever Israel deemed them necessary. Since mid-December, the number of Israeli air violations has decreased. As in the past, Israeli aircraft often penetrated deep into Lebanese airspace, sometimes generating sonic booms over populated areas. The pattern identified in my previous reports continued, whereby the aircraft would sometimes fly out to sea and enter Lebanese airspace north of the UNIFIL area of operation, thus avoiding direct observation and verification by UNIFIL.

11. There were no instances of Hizbollah anti-aircraft fire across the Blue Line during the period under review.

12. My senior representatives in the region and I, in addition to a number of concerned Member States, called on numerous occasions on the Government of Lebanon to extend control over all its territory. I urged the Governments of Israel and Lebanon to fully respect the Blue Line in its entirety and to avoid any actions that could lead to an escalation.

13. On 8 September, the Israeli authorities handed over the body of a Hizbollah fighter, who had been killed in the Shab'a farms area on 29 June. The arrangements for that transfer were made through the ICRC; UNIFIL facilitated the handover through the Rosh Haniqra crossing.

14. A Lebanese fisherman went missing on 22 October. His vacant boat was sighted in Lebanese waters before it drifted into Israeli territorial waters and ran aground near Nahariyya. UNIFIL helicopters assisted in an intensive search operation but his body was not recovered. IDF returned the boat through the services of UNIFIL on 24 October. There were a number of bullet marks on the boat. IDF explained that they had opened fire as a precaution in case the boat was booby-trapped, but that it was already empty at the time.

15. In a few instances, IDF fired small- and medium-arms and illumination rounds across the Blue Line, particularly in the Shab'a farms and Yarun areas. UNIFIL called upon the Israeli authorities to halt such actions as firing across the Line has escalatory potential.

16. UNIFIL recorded a number of Lebanese ground violations of the Blue Line, primarily by shepherds, in the Shab'a farms and Ghajar areas. Such violations have become an almost daily routine, often involving the same local shepherds. UNIFIL has urged the Lebanese authorities to prevent all ground violations, in particular the frequent crossings of the Blue Line by shepherds in the Shab'a farms area. The risk that these violations could lead to more serious incidents was demonstrated on 16 September, when IDF apprehended two Lebanese shepherds who had crossed the Blue Line in the Shab'a farms area. IDF released the shepherds to UNIFIL the following day.

17. Demonstrations on the Lebanese side of the Blue Line occurred periodically at the points of friction identified in my previous reports, namely Sheikh Abbad Hill, east of Hula, and Fatima gate, west of Metulla. The demonstrators occasionally

threw stones and other objects at IDF positions and, at times, tampered with the technical fence.

18. The authority and control of the Government of Lebanon remained limited in the south, in general, and in the areas of the Blue Line, in particular. The Gendarmerie units and the Joint Security Force, comprised of army and internal security forces, continued to conduct mobile patrols and maintain several checkpoints in the UNIFIL area of operation. The Lebanese Army operates in some of the areas vacated by Israel in May 2000, but at a distance from the Blue Line. At the request of UNIFIL, the Joint Security Force intervened on a few occasions to control demonstrations and avert possible incidents along the Blue Line except in the Ghajar area. Despite numerous calls by the Security Council, the Government of Lebanon continues to maintain its position that, without a comprehensive peace with Israel, Lebanese armed forces would not act as a border guard for Israel and would not be deployed along the Blue Line.

19. In a positive development, the liaison between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army was strengthened during the period under review. On 23 December, the Army Liaison Office completed its move from Qana to Naqoura and is now co-located with UNIFIL headquarters. On 13 January, one liaison officer was appointed in each of the two UNIFIL field battalions on a permanent basis and on 16 January, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified UNIFIL of the appointment of General Abdel-Rahman Chehaytly to the position of Government Coordinator with UNIFIL, a post which had been vacant since October 2005.

20. The Force Commander, Major General Alain Pellegrini, and my Personal Representative for Lebanon, Geir Pedersen, have held successive discussions with the highest Lebanese political and military officials, including the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Parliament, the ministers for foreign affairs, defence and interior, and the head of the army, on the extension of the Government's authority to the south and, in particular on ways to bring about the deployment of the armed forces in the south. Top officials have reacted cautiously, expressing concern about possible negative implications on national security and stability. In a letter dated 9 January 2006 to the Foreign Minister, Major General Pellegrini proposed a better coordination mechanism between UNIFIL and the Lebanese armed forces and the establishment of a joint planning cell, composed of members of the Lebanese armed forces and UNIFIL, to draw up a detailed plan for the extension of Lebanese authority in the UNIFIL area of operation, including the deployment of the Lebanese Army to the south of Lebanon. In his response of 16 January, the Foreign Minister informed the Force Commander that the Lebanese authorities have positively taken note of the proposal and would revert in substance following further study and consultations.

21. Control of the Blue Line and its vicinity seems to remain for the most part with Hizbollah. Under such circumstances, Hizbollah has maintained and reinforced a visible presence in the area, with permanent observation posts, temporary checkpoints and patrols. It carried out construction work to fortify and expand some of its fixed positions, demined the adjacent areas, built new access roads and established new positions close to the Blue Line. Some Hizbollah positions are in close proximity to United Nations positions, posing additional security risks to United Nations personnel and equipment. This situation has not yet been rectified despite repeated objections conveyed by UNIFIL to the Lebanese authorities.

22. UNIFIL encountered an increase of temporary denials of access by Hizbollah. In general, the Force was able to regain and assert its freedom of movement within a very short period of time.

23. UNIFIL continued to assist the civilian population with medical and dental care, water projects, equipment or services for schools and orphanages, and supplied social services to the needy. Veterinary assistance was also provided. The resources for UNIFIL assistance were primarily made available by troop-contributing countries. UNIFIL cooperated closely on humanitarian matters with the Lebanese authorities, United Nations agencies, ICRC, embassies and other organizations and agencies operating in Lebanon.

24. The presence of a large number of minefields in the UNIFIL area of operation, in particular along the Blue Line, remained a cause of serious concern. Since July 2005, two civilians have been killed and six injured by explosions of mines or ordnance. UNIFIL continued its operational demining activities, clearing over 400 mines and rounds of unexploded ordnance in an area measuring some 12,000 square metres; surveyed the roads; and continued marking and fencing known minefields. A substantial amount of information on the presence of minefields in the area has been received from IDF in the past. Nevertheless, information about some areas close to the Blue Line is still lacking.

25. The number of mine incidents and civilian casualties are tragically increasing as the local demand for land continues to grow. In response, the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre sought permission from the Government of Lebanon to commence clearance operations in the most affected locations along the Blue Line. Permission was granted in October 2005 and one mine clearance team, managed by the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre, was assigned permanently to work in those minefields; permission to work in additional areas is being sought. This is an encouraging development, as these minefields continue to prevent the use of large areas of prime agricultural or grazing land having a direct impact on the life of the communities living adjacent to them.

III. Organizationai matters

26. UNIFIL continued its efforts to maintain the ceasefire along the Blue Line through mobile ground and air patrols, observation from fixed positions and close contact with the parties, the latter with a view to correcting violations, resolving incidents and preventing escalation. Its operations were concentrated along the Blue Line, though the Force maintained a few rear positions. The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), through the Observer Group Lebanon, supported UNIFIL in the fulfilment of its mandate.

27. As at 31 December 2005, UNIFIL comprised 1,989 troops, from France (203), Ghana (648), India (671), Ireland (6), Italy (53), Poland (212) and Ukraine (196). UNIFIL was assisted in its tasks by 51 UNTSO military observers. A map showing the current deployment of UNIFIL is attached. With effect from 26 October, a medical unit from India replaced the Polish medical company manning the UNIFIL hospital. In addition, UNIFIL employed 390 civilian staff, of whom 100 were recruited internationally and 290 locally. Major General Pellegrini continued as Force Commander. Mr. Pedersen continued to act as my Personal Representative for Lebanon.

28. Since the establishment of UNIFIL, 246 members of the Force have lost their lives, 79 as a result of firings or bomb explosions, 105 as a result of accidents and 62 from other causes. A total of 345 members of the Force have been wounded by firing or mine explosions.

IV. Financial matters

29. By its resolution 59/307 of 22 June 2005, the General Assembly appropriated to the Special Account for UNIFIL the amount of $94.3 million gross, equivalent to $7.9 million per month, for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of the Force beyond 31 January 2006, as recommended in paragraph 40 below, the cost of maintaining the Force will be limited to the amounts approved by the Assembly.

30. As at 30 November 2005, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNIFIL amounted to $72.6 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amounted to $1,988.3 million.

31. As at 31 December 2005, amounts owed to troop contributors totalled $4.6 million. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs have been made for the period up to 31 October 2005 and 30 September 2005, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

V. Observations

32. A fragile political and security environment continued to prevail in Lebanon. In the south, the general situation remained for the most part calm, though volatile. The greatest cause for concern was the Hizbollah attack across the Blue Line on 21 November, which was a deliberate act in direct breach of the decisions of the Security Council and led to a heavy exchange of fire between Hizbollah and IDF. The exchange of fire inside the village of Ghajar was the first time since the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 that a confrontation had taken place within a populated area, which posed grave dangers for the civilian population of the village. I appeal to the parties to exercise utmost restraint so as not to endanger civilian lives on either side of the Blue Line and remind them that one violation cannot justify another. I remain concerned about the precarious situation in the village, where another clash could evolve into a major confrontation. The incident highlighted the need for stronger security control around the village. UNIFIL has established a static patrol presence on the northern side of Ghajar and is ready to assist the Government of Lebanon with its responsibilities in this respect.

33. The rocket firing incidents in August and December, perpetrated by unidentified armed elements, carried significant potential for a military escalation. It should be noted that IDF acted with restraint in August, when it did not respond militarily to the attack. The Lebanese authorities have formally pronounced themselves to be against such attacks emanating from their territory, and I am encouraged by their determination and commitment, as expressed in a letter to me dated 28 November 2005, to hold the perpetrators of such attacks responsible so as to avoid recurrence of such attacks in the future.

34. Persistent Israeli air incursions, occasionally reaching far into Lebanese airspace, violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity, remain a matter of deep concern. The air incursions elevate tension and disrupt the fragile calm along the Blue Line. Their cessation, consistently called for by the United Nations and a number of concerned Member States, would contribute to maintaining calm along the Blue Line.

35. The serious breaches of the ceasefire underlined yet again the urgent need for the Government of Lebanon to act and extend its full authority throughout the south down to the Blue Line and to deploy sufficient numbers of armed and security forces to maintain law and order and ensure a calm environment. It is essential that the Government assert effective control over the use of force throughout its entire territory and prevent attacks from Lebanon across the Blue Line. My Personal Representative will continue to discuss these matters with the Government and provide the support of the United Nations in achieving this objective. UNIFIL stands ready to assist the Lebanese authorities in this endeavour, as necessary.

36. I welcome the decision of the Government of Lebanon to co-locate the Army Liaison Office with UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura, to appoint liaison officers with the UNIFIL field battalions and to work closer with the Force in the field. I am also pleased to note the appointment of the new Government Coordinator with UNIFIL. However, more needs to be done. Planning for the deployment of additional forces in the south should start without delay. In that regard, I encourage the Government of Lebanon to take up the Force Commander's proposal to establish a joint planning cell, composed of members of the Lebanese armed forces and UNIFIL. The activities and presence of the Joint Security Force could also be enhanced on the ground, even within the limits of its authorized number of 1,000. Additionally, closer coordination between UNIFIL and the Joint Security Force patrols in the area of operation would contribute to enhancing the role and activities of the Lebanese armed forces in the area. The implications of an increased presence of the Lebanese armed forces in the south for UNIFIL structure and force strength will be assessed on a regular basis.

37. The situation along the Blue Line continues to be susceptible to volatile regional developments. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, my Personal Representative for Lebanon and the UNIFIL Force Commander act in unison to defuse crises as they arise. The situation in the Middle East continues to be very tense and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached. This underscores the need for determined efforts by all concerned to tackle the problem in all its aspects, with a view to arriving at a just and durable peace settlement, based on all relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). My senior representatives in the region will continue to contribute to these efforts by lending political and diplomatic support to the parties in order to defuse sources of friction and by working towards the establishment of lasting peace and security in southern Lebanon.

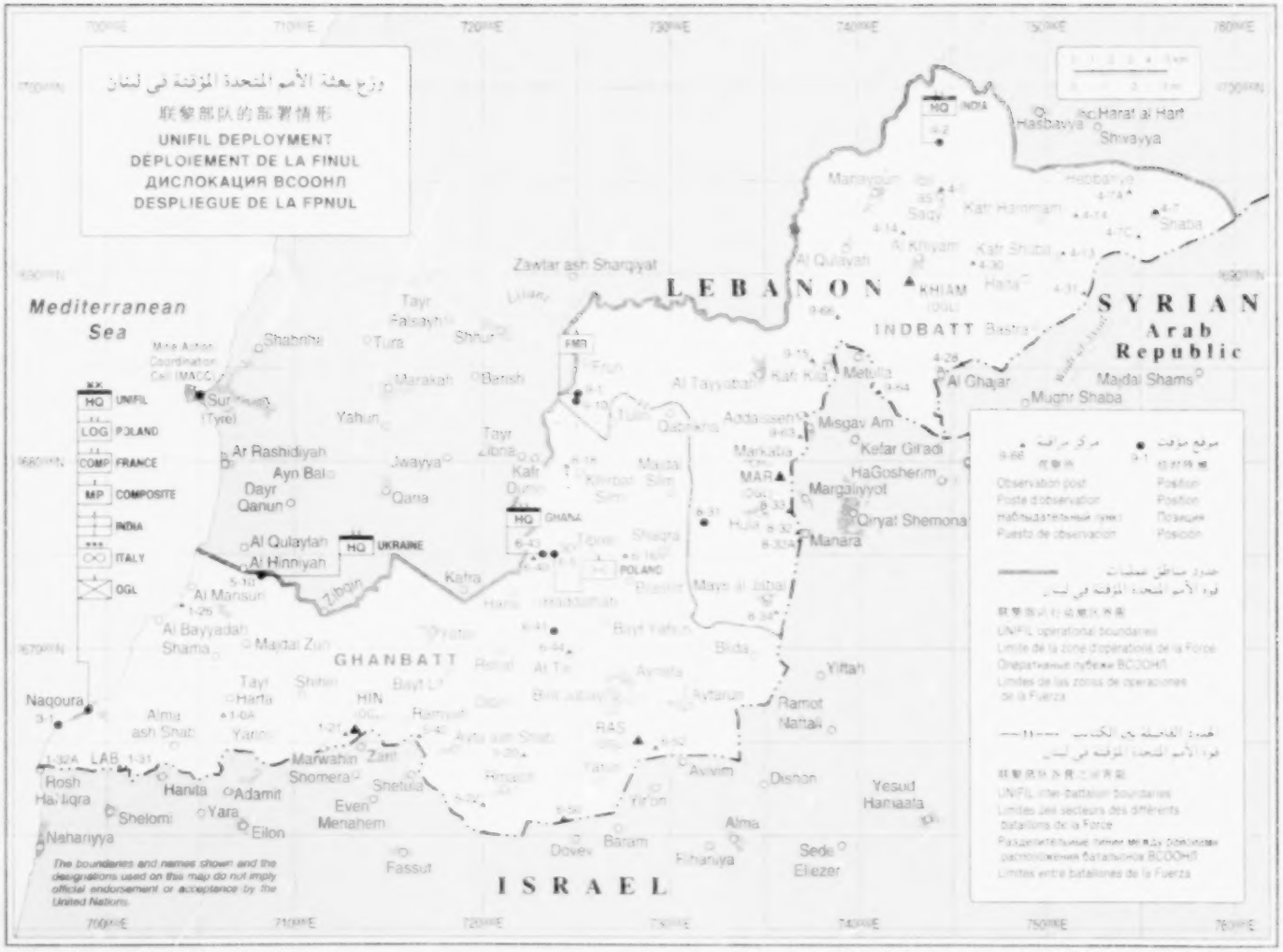
38. UNIFIL, for its part, will focus on the remaining part of its mandate, the restoration of international peace and security, by observing, monitoring and reporting on developments in its area of operation and liaising with the parties to maintain calm.

39. Economic development of the south is inextricably linked with peace and security. However, economic aid has been slow in coming. I call upon the Government, international donors, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to increase their efforts to work towards the economic rehabilitation and development of southern Lebanon.

40. In his letter dated 9 January 2006 (S/2006/15) addressed to me, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations conveyed his Government's request that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of six months. In the light of the prevailing conditions in the area, I support the extension and recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 July 2006.

41. In making this recommendation, I must again draw attention to the serious shortfall in the funding of UNIFIL. At present, unpaid assessments amount to $72.6 million. This represents money owed to the Member States contributing the troops that make up the Force. I appeal to all Member States to pay their assessments promptly and in full, and to clear all remaining arrears. I should like to express my gratitude to the Governments contributing troops to the Force for their understanding and patience in these difficult circumstances.

42. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Special Coordinator, Alvaro de Soto, and my Personal Representative, Mr. Pedersen, and to pay tribute to the Force Commander, Major General Pellegrini, and the men and women of UNIFIL for the manner in which they have carried out their difficult and often dangerous task. Their discipline and bearing have been of a high order, reflecting credit on themselves, their countries and on the United Nations.



Map No. 4144 Rev. 11 UNITED NATIONS
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